The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 44, Vol. iv.] BELFAST, AUGUST, 1st, 1884. [For Gratuitous Circulation

THE Rev. J. C. Street begs to acknowledge the following contributions in aid of the publication and gratuitous circulation of the *Chronicle and Index*:—Miss Winstanley, Clitheroe, 2/6; Mr. W. W. Drummond, Belfast, 5/-; Mr. Geo. Gibson, Dunmurry, 3/-.

REPRESENTATIVES from many Presbyterian Churches of many lands have been holding a Council at Belfast. Their proceedings have been interesting. As a body, the Presbyterians are very rigid in their theology, and very prosaic in their methods. Belfast is the headquarters of the narrowness and dullness of Presbyterianism. But the visitors from other lands have brought a little more light and vivacity with them, and the venerable fathers here must have been just a little scandalized by the utterances and doings of their visitors. But good will come out of it all. It will be seen that the world is larger than the North of Ireland, and that Presbyterianism is broader than the Irish General Assembly. Some steps in advance were taken. Churches that fought shy of the Standards were admitted. All the Churches were counselled by some speakers to revise the Standards, and the language and discoveries of science were actually used and referred to in the course of debate. Verily the day is dawning!

IT must be a matter of surprise, as it is one of great significance, to note how large a number of ministers of various denominations of late years have left their own Churches and thrown in their lot with us. From all sides they have come, and they are still in constant stream flowing towards us. A large number of our pulpits are now occupied by those who were trained in other Churches. With us they find the freedom which was denied to them elsewhere. They bring fresh associations, methods, and phraseology among us, and it is hoped that in some respects they will augment our power, and increase our usefulness. We give a hearty welcome to all such as for reasons of conscience and fidelity have snapped old ties and cast in their lot with us. Any who may have come from other reasons, if there are any, will soon find that the lot of the minister of one of our Free Churches, however honourable, is one of hardship and isolation, and is only to be held by men who are self-sacrificing and earnest.

THE Rev. J. WOOD is just leaving the Congregational body, and becoming minister of our oldest church in Birmingham. The transition is a pretty swift one, without apparently any change of convictions on the part of Mr. Wood. He seems to have been a Liberal and a Unitarian in theology for a long time, and to have had the confidence and respect of his people. His church was, we understand, free from doctrinal trusts or tests, and so there was no legal obligation to preach orthodox theology. But Mr. Wood and his people belonged to the Congregational Union, and that body distinctly avows its dogmatic basis. It is difficult to understand how Mr. Wood maintained his position for so long a period. He will find that he is entering a wider field, where liberty is better understood, and where, without compromising his people, or any organization whatever, he may declare what seems to him to be the "whole counsel of God." We trust he will now find himself in a spiritual home where all that is best and noblest in him may have fullest exercise.

WE observe that a new effort after union has been commenced in England under the

name of "The Christian Disciples' Union," and it is interesting to note how many of the first "disciples" are from the North of Ireland. It is significant that the originators feel it necessary to lay down a doctrinal basis for their union, though it is a very attenuated one. Still we wish the movement Godspeed. All efforts for "union" are praiseworthy though the methods may be unwise. The discussion in the *Inquirer* following the formation of the "Union" is not a happy augury, but doubtless the glittering blades of the combatants will speedily rest in their scabbards without having done much harm to the warriors, or done more than excite admiration of their skill of fence among the onlookers.

AN effort is being made to raise funds in England to cover the expenses connected with a series of "Special Services for the People," to be held in London and other large towns during the coming winter. No doubt the money will be raised, and if the right steps be taken and suitable Preachers be found, there will be no difficulty in getting the people together, and causing a wide-spread enquiry into the great matters connected with Theology and Religion.

THIS is a time of trial for our Churches in Ireland. In consequence of the deaths of Revs. John Porter, F. Blair and J. M'Caw the pulpits at Ballee, Templepatrick and Killinchy are vacant, while several other of our churches seem to be hopelessly closed. If we are to live in Ireland, the bonds of union must be drawn more closely, and we must earnestly strive to strengthen each other's hands.

ON Sunday, June 30th, a Floral Service was held in Mountpottinger Church. The building was gracefully decorated with flowers and evergreens. The church was crowded with an appreciative audience, and the hymns sung by the children were carefully rendered. Mr. Reynolds conducted the service, and delivered an address on "Flowers." At the close of his address he made an appeal for funds to defray the expenses of a trip for the children, and we believe his appeal was liberally responded to.

UPWARDS of fifty members of the Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Society proceeded on Saturday, July 5th, on an excursion to Crawfordsburn, where they held their annual excursion most enjoyably. On arriving at Clandeboye some of the gentlemen took advantage of high water and bathed, whilst the remainder of the party wandered at will through the glen, until they ultimately assembled at Mrs. Campbell's well-known and popular hotel in the village. Here they partook of an excellent tea, after which they sat to be portrayed in a photographic group which was taken by Mr. Welch. One of the aims of the Society is "the furtherance of fellowship and acquaintance among its members," and this was accomplished in a marked degree on the present occasion by a most enjoyable dance from eight to ten p.m. The party afterwards left for the railway station to catch the 10-36 train, and in the special saloon carriage reserved for the excursionists a number of songs were rendered enthusiastically *en route* to Belfast. We can only add that the officers of this flourishing Association can confidently congratulate themselves on the success of the picnic, which was pronounced by all the members the best the Society has ever had during the thirteen years of its history.

ON Sunday, July 6th, at four o'clock, the Annual Scholars' Floral Service took place in Rosemary Street Church (Rev. J. C. Street's), which was filled to overflowing by the scholars and their friends. The interior of the edifice was, as usual, decorated in a most artistic manner with the choicest of flowers and plants. In all parts of the building great skill was displayed in the arrangement of the elegant materials which the ladies who undertook the work had at their disposal, and which they disposed of in such a really effective manner. In the vestibule visitors found a very fine collection of plants and flowers, which at once raised to a lofty pitch their anticipations regarding the sight which awaited them inside the church. Here flowers and plants were to be found at all points. The aisles were spanned by arches. At the upper end of the aisles were pyramidical-shaped

structures, covered from base to summit with the choicest of plants and flowers. From the top of each of the arches fog baskets were suspended. The windows were decked with ferns, and on each sill was a varied assortment of flowers. But of course the centre of attraction was the pulpit, which was completely hidden from view by rows of roses and fuchsia blooms in every variety of colour, while at the base of the pulpit lay a magnificent assortment of water-lilies. The organ, the columns supporting the galleries, &c., all received attention in the floral decorations, which must have entailed a vast amount of labour on the fair hands employed in the task. The scholars in attendance were from Mountpottinger, Hopeton Street, and Rosemary Street Schools, together with some from Moneyrea. In the course of the service the Rev. J. C. Street delivered a most appropriate address. A number of musical selections were sweetly rendered by the choir. The organ was presided at by Mr. Herbert Darbishire, who played a voluntary in a most skilful manner. The very large quantity of valuable flowers used in the decoration of the church was sent to the Royal Hospital.

The Sunday School children and friends connected with the Comber congregation had their Annual Excursion on Monday, July 14th. In number between four and five hundred, accompanied by a band of music, and bearing before them flags and banners of pleasing devices, they left the Comber station and came in by train to Belfast, where they went on board the Bangor boat. Here they were joined by Belfast and other friends. Mr. Dunkerley was surrounded by his teachers and fellow-workers, and we observed the Revs. J. M'Caw, J. A. Kelly, H. M'Gowan, and Jas. C. Street also present. The sea trip, though a little marred by summer showers, was much enjoyed; and the proceedings of the day in Bangor, Ballyholme, the Good Templars' Hall, and the country lanes, though chequered by variable weather, were greatly appreciated by the young folk who were out for their annual holiday. The minister, teachers, and friends, did all in their power to make the scholars happy, and undoubtedly each and all will have pleasant memories of a well spent day. The sail up the lough was very delightful, and the return home afforded an opportunity for talking over the incidents of the day.

The children of Hopeton Street School were greatly delighted on Saturday, July 26th, by an Excursion they made to Clandeboye. They met at Rosemary Street in the morning, and then went down to the Railway Station together, and left for Clandeboye by the 12 o'clock train. Some who could not get away so early came by later trains and joined the party. On arrival at Clandeboye the happy party soon made their way to a pleasant country house and grounds occupied for this summer season by Mrs. Parker, who most generously received the merry group from the crowded streets and alleys of Belfast, and, with the teachers and friends who were present, did everything that was possible to make the day a pleasant one for them. Buns, cake, fruit, and milk were provided, and then the youngsters enjoyed games in the barn, the orchard, and the lanes, and afterwards had the delight of going down to the sea-side, where they passed a happy time. As the day wore on the scattered groups returned to Mrs. Parker's ground, where a second repast, with the addition of lemonade, sweets, &c., was provided and enjoyed. Then games, races, swinging, &c., were indulged in, and hearty cheers given for Mrs. Parker and the teachers, and all returned in good order to the train, and subsequently arrived safely in Belfast after a most enjoyable day in the country and by the sea. Mrs. Parker most hospitably entertained the teachers and friends to lunch and tea, and put her house and grounds at the full disposal of all the party. Notwithstanding the drawback of successive showers of rain, the day will have left an impression of joy and brightness which will not soon be forgotten.

The scholars belonging to the Moneyrea Sunday and Day Schools, together with many children from neighbouring schools, had their Annual Festival on Saturday, in a field near

the meeting-house, kindly lent for the purpose by Mr. James Magill, of Moneyrea. Notwithstanding that the weather in the early part of the day was very unfavourable, there was a large muster of children; and towards evening, when the weather became more favourable, the congregation and friends gathered as numerously as on any former occasion. Games of various kinds, athletic sports, and dancing to the strains of the Ballygowan Band were indulged in until a late hour in the evening. Tea was provided by the Moneyrea teachers, the following ladies presiding at the tables:—Mrs. Rylett, Miss M'Dowell, Miss M'Master, Miss Matilda Porter, Miss Frame, Miss Aggie M'Clure, Miss Thompson, Miss Mehaffey, Miss Margaret Anna Magowan, Miss Lizzie Frame, and Miss Jane Frame. There were many visitors from a distance, including Mr. Robert M'Calmont, F.C.S., of Belfast. The Rev. Harold Rylett brought the proceedings to a close.

Our friends at Leek have issued another of their useful and suggestive Reprints. This time Mr. William Morris, author of "The Earthly Paradise," discourses well and fruitfully on "Art and Socialism." The lecture was delivered at Leicester, and it well deserves publication in this elegant form. Mr. Morris puts forward the aims and ideals of modern socialists in an attractive and persuasive manner, and he certainly strikes home with many of his suggestions and illustrations. The little pamphlet is enriched by most telling quotations from modern thinkers and poets, and it is calculated to rouse in many minds doubts about our present so-called civilization and religion, and to inspire earnest natures with loftier ideals and purer aims. The Reprint is now in its second edition and may be bought for 3d. per copy.

A Sunday School Conference in connection with the Unitarian Society was held at Comber, on the afternoon of Sunday, July 20th, in which, by invitation from the Comber congregation, a large company of teachers and friends from Belfast, Mountpottinger, Moneyrea, and Killinchy took part. And certainly if success can justify an innovation, the new departure of a Sunday Conference might well become more an established institution, at any rate in rural districts—for in addition to a large attendance, the entire proceedings were most hearty and full of interest. Surely the "Master's day" is not inappropriate for workers in "His vineyard" to take counsel together, and it possesses the special advantage that the proceedings need not be crowded into an hour or two at the close of a day's ordinary business. Mr. James M. Darbishire, of Belfast, occupied the chair, and after making a few introductory remarks, he called upon the Rev. J. C. Street to deliver the special address of the occasion.

Mr. Street stated that he purposed to address a few words of counsel to the managers and teachers of Sunday Schools; that some of his observations would have direct reference to the former, some to the latter, while others would apply equally to both. He would have every minister, as a matter of the utmost importance, to take a direct personal interest in his Sunday School, never being absent except when quite unavoidable. Not that he (the minister) should take the practical superintendence, nor yet occupy his time in class teaching, but that he should be intimately associated with the active superintendent, and and also with each teacher in his or her work—in short, that he should be the inspiring spirit giving life and animation to the entire work and routine of the school. The active superintendent, however, should be thoroughly practical, understanding and entering fully into all the mechanical arrangements of the work. Not only should he intimately know all the teachers, but as far as possible every individual scholar, with something as to the circumstances of their several lives. He should possess a correct record of the attendance, or failing that, keep his eye carefully on the marking of the class registers, in order to admit of the absentees being systematically looked up. The school buildings Mr. Street would have constructed with full regard to light, ventilation, comfort, and elegant appearance; and in the furnishing the aim should be to make the place attractive

and cheerful in the highest degree. Suitable mottoes, pictures, flowers, anything likely to contribute to this end, should not be wanting, and he would even aspire to the American idea of carpeted rooms. The Sunday School should be a bright spot in the children's lives, the place to which they turn with pleasure; its influence should directly mould their daily lives, giving them, moreover, an elevated standard by which to compare the, too often, sad and dismal surroundings of their homes. Music should enter largely into the School Services, but music of a high order; the endeavour should be to make our Sunday Schools refine and educate the general taste for music, rather than to be content with the adoption of popular airs of every questionable merit. Special Childrens' Services should also be held, at least once a month; but they should be made particularly attractive in order to form a pleasant break from the ordinary routine of class teaching. Mr. Street did not lay down any rule as to the subject-matter of teaching, but he most emphatically enforced the absolute duty of every teacher carefully preparing his or her subject. He remarked that it was quite as unreasonable for a teacher to meet his class unprepared with a definite lesson as it would be for a minister to mount a pulpit, or a platform, without having given his best thought to the subject of his utterance. Children, he said, were singularly sensitive, they could readily detect any inconsistency or shortcoming—and, of course, they would judge, even a teacher, accordingly.

In conclusion, Mr. Street urged that perfect unanimity and communion should exist in the Sunday School, not only between the teachers themselves, but also between the teachers and the scholars, and that all class distinctions should be left outside.

In the discussion which followed, the Rev. Thomas Cooper (Belfast) advocated the more general adoption of agencies, such as Mutual Improvement Societies, which would tend to retain the interest of the elder scholars in the Sunday School.

The Rev. Thomas Dunkerley (Comber) expressed his full concurrence with every portion of Mr. Street's address, himself urging the higher and more general culture of music; and addressing himself directly to his own young friends present, he pressed upon them to let a minister's hope in his case be fulfilled, by their remaining, as teachers, attached to the school in which they had themselves been trained.

Miss Bruce (Hopeton Street School) heartily endorsed the views which had been embodied in the address; and she made also several suggestions as to the best means of securing the interest of the children.

Dr. Hyndman, Belfast (President of the Unitarian Association), who was present, being invited by the Chairman to speak, briefly stated that, being in Comber for the end of the week, he had joined the meeting in order to attest his appreciation of, and sympathy with, the work of Sunday Schools.

Mr. Davidson also, in a few words, as a member of the Comber congregation, expressed the pleasure it gave him to welcome so many visitors in connection with so important a work.

Mr. D. Bulmer (Hopeton Street School) said that he had in the first instance entered upon the work merely to fill up a void, but that it had now grown upon him, and become a labour of love.

The Rev. W. Reynolds (Mountpottinger) strongly advocated more active sympathy with Sunday School work, by congregations generally in this country, remarking that compared with England, we were very much behindhand.

Mr. Street having thanked the meeting for its cordial reception of his address, the proceedings were terminated by the singing of a hymn and the benediction.

The visitors afterwards enjoyed the hospitality of the congregation, tea being served in the old schoolhouse, and that over, full advantage was taken of the opportunity to spend a pleasant hour in the pretty grounds attached to the church and manse, before the time of the special service which followed, as a fitting close to the Conference. At the latter, the Revs. J. Cooper and J. M'Caw conducted the

devotional part of the service, and both the REV. T. DUNKERLEY and J. C. STREET delivered suitable and impressive addresses.

The following was sent to the *Paisley Express*:—

SIR,—In justice to the living and the dead, I trust you will find room for the following authoritative contradiction of a falsehood oft repeated and widely believed by the credulous. A minister in your district made certain statements to a Unitarian which were understood as a repetition of this slander, though the person in question did not know such had been made before. On my authority the minister was contradicted, but he repeated the statements, which were again understood in the same sense. It was because of this unpleasant incident that I wrote for the facts to the only living man able to speak with authority on the subject, my friend, the Rev. W. H. Channing, B.A., one of our London Unitarian ministers, and nephew of the great man whose name some interested parties have tried to sully in the way indicated below. The minister in question repudiates the interpretation put on his words; but lest others should unhappily have fallen into a similar misunderstanding, I quote the essential portions of the letter I received:—

3 Campden House Road, Kensington,
June 19, 1884.

DEAR MR. STREET,—Your note of the 16th asking from me a statement of the "facts" as to the last words of the Rev. Dr. W. E. Channing upon his death-bed has just reached me; and this reply is written without delay.

The statement—that on his death-bed Dr. Channing felt the miserable inadequacy of his Unitarian faith, and cried out piteously for "more light"—does not rest upon the slightest fragment of fact for its foundation. The Rev. Dr. Channing, from the beginning to the close of his illness, never uttered a single syllable corresponding to those so falsely attributed to him. On the contrary, every word and act of his proved conclusively that he remained serenely happy in his Unitarian faith to the end. This affirmation is made by me with the solemnity of an oath.

. . . . . .

I was his nearest witness night and day, watching beside his bed, reading to him, talking with him, listening to his prayers, and sharing his inmost confidence until he drew his last breath. Day by day I wrote down in my journal the result of our interviews and conversations, which journal will be found printed in the last chapters of "Dr. Channing's Memoir" and of "The Centenary Life."

. . . . . .

Over and over again has this monstrous lie of Evangelical bigots as to "Dr. Channing's recantation of his Unitarian faith upon his death-bed" been exposed and refuted by his nearest friends and disciples, alike in the U.S.A. and Great Britain. And now, in order to crush into dust the head of this lying slander, if possible, for ever,—though the brood of "the Father of Lies" is hard to kill,—my wish is that you shall publish as widely as may be this solemn testimony of the sole surviving witness of Dr. Channing's death-bed, of the only person who listened to his last whisper and received his last breath.

WILLIAM HENRY CHANNING.

Rev. Christopher J. Street.

It would be but an act of justice if other papers would copy this testimony of Mr. Channing's to the unswerving loyalty of his sainted uncle to the principles and doctrines of Unitarianism.

Yours, &c.,

CHRISTOPHER J. STREET, M.A.,
Lecturer for the Scottish Unitarian Christian Association.

THE work of the Scottish Lectureship has naturally slackened since the lighter weather set in, but will commence again with full vigour next month. Meanwhile Sunday Services are being regularly conducted for the two new causes at Paisley and Kilbarchan. The latter especially is an unusual success considering the small population of the town. The people are full of earnest enthusiasm. A joint pastorate for the two places has been decided on, and a cordial and unanimous invitation

was sent to our old friend the Rev. Thomas Leyland, now of Burnley and formerly of Moneyrea. Unfortunately for our Paisley and Kilbarchan friends, however, Mr. Leyland did not feel justified in accepting the call because of the pressure brought to bear to persuade him to remain in Burnley. We wish the infant causes every success in their search for a suitable minister and hope to hear of a vigorous man being settled down to the work ere long. The Rev. Christopher J. Street, M.A., takes charge meanwhile. Since our last notice he has given lectures at Renfrew and Dundee, and also at Clitheroe in Lancashire. We are glad to learn that the faithful little band of sympathisers is meeting for worship every Sunday at Clitheroe, and that they are not discouraged by the day of small things. Faithful devotion to the cause will doubtless secure ultimate success, but in any case it will bring comfort and peace of mind to those who stand firm to their principles.

THE REV. JOHN M'CAW.

Just as we are going to press the painful news has reached us that another of our brave standard-bearers has been struck down on the spiritual battle-field. The Rev. John M'Caw of Killinchy, and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Unitarian Society, after nearly half a century's work as minister of the Remonstrant Presbyterian body has died suddenly at his post, and left a large band of devoted friends and sorrowing relatives to mourn his loss. He preached as usual on Sunday, and it was while he was out on pastoral duty on Monday morning that the silent messenger reached him and bade him lay down his earthly ministry and enter upon his higher ministry in heaven. There is hardly a man in our Churches who will be more missed than the venerable pastor of Killinchy. He was everywhere known, respected, and honoured in our community. For a whole generation past he has been a conspicuous figure in our household of faith. Kind-hearted, and catholic in spirit, he was loved by all. He had the happy faculty of seeing the best side of his fellow-men, and found out the redeeming and reconciling qualities while men less large-hearted than he could only see the failings and contradictions of their neighbours. In the times of conflict through which the Remonstrants passed, and the sharper battles which raged within the smaller circle of our own community he always took a clear and decided position; boldly asserting his own principles and aiming at an ever-enlarging comprehensiveness, but at the same time scrupulously avoiding wounding the sensibilities and consciences of others, and trying to bring about peaceful relations among those whom doctrines divided. His very presence in a meeting, as in a house of trouble, had a cheering influence. Warm, frank, and genial, he seemed like a ray of sunshine. He had a ready wit, and a rich fund of racy anecdote, and had always an apt word ready suited for the passing occasion. As minister of a very large parish, including hundreds of families spread over a wide area of country, he was well known in the county, and was on the kindliest terms not only with his own congregation but with the ministers and members of all the Churches in the district. He was always a reconciler, prompt to acknowledge a fault, and swift to make amends if a wrong had been done. He would always go more than half way to meet any one from whom there had been a temporary estrangement. He was a man of clear convictions, but also a man who had profound respect for the convictions of others. Frank and outspoken, he was free from all disguises, so that no one ever had a doubt as to "honest John M'Caw." As a preacher, Mr. M'Caw was distinguished for his plain, practical common sense rather than for profound thought or elegance of diction; but he had a directness of aim, and a pungency of speech, which were understood and appreciated by the country gentlemen and farmers, with their wives and families, who formed the large majority of his congregation. He was a faithful and honest interpreter of God's truth so far as he understood it. But it was as a pastor that his influence was most widely felt. He was known and loved in every home. He was on happy terms with old and young, with rich and poor. His advice was constantly sought. Nothing could be done without him. He was the cement of the social circle. He made religion the substance of his life and embodied it in all his conduct. His death will carry dismay into hundreds of homes. In Church matters he took a prominent and honoured part. Every mark of distinction that could be conferred upon him was freely given; but he always shrank from prominence and was content to be a humble soldier, leaving captaincy willingly to others. Such men as he make no name in the world, and fail to win the distinctions which the world confers, but they write their records in indelible characters upon the lives of others, and so help to mould the generations yet to be. We can ill spare such men. But God raises up new workers, and equips new soldiers for His battle-field, so we need not doubt or despair. One passeth away, and lo! another ts ready to seize the flag and carry it forward to the scenes of new victories.

The Treasurer of the Unitarian Society begs to acknowledge receipt of the following subscriptions for 1883:—

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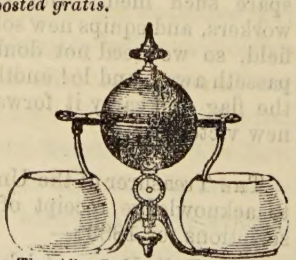

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Contributions in aid of the *Chronicle and Index* will be gladly received and acknowledged by the Rev. J. C. STREET.

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Amount already received,.. .. .. £503 14 0

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